



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
April 13th, 2011**

Welcome and Approval of March Meeting Summary Minutes:

Trish Gallalee, Chair, convened the meeting. Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Lu Merrick, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Welcome to Christopher Moy, Director of ADA Compliance, Montgomery College (Replacing Rose Sachs):

Christopher Moy is the new Ex-Officio Non-Voting Commission Member representing Montgomery College. He has worked in higher education for the last ten years and has worked with people with disabilities for 15 years. He is familiar and aware of the different issues that people with disabilities face. Christopher looks forward to learning more about the Commission and contributing as he can.

Chair and Vice Chair Report:

On April 5, 2011, Trish Gallalee, Chair, testified before the County Council on the FY12 Operating Budget. She thanked the Commissioners for their contributions.

Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, is continuing to discuss Ride On issues with Carolyn Biggins, Chief, Division of Transit Services. Issues include accessibility of bus stops, automated bus stop announcements and the ability of bus drivers to accommodate persons with disabilities. A mystery rider program was recently conducted, which yielded less than satisfactory results. Ms. Biggins is having a Director of Training work with the Ride On drivers to address those issues.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month Proclamation:

Jay Kenney, Ph.D., Chief, Aging & Disability Services, presented a proclamation on behalf of County Executive Isiah Leggett and County Council Vice President Valerie Ervin, for Brain Injury Awareness and Prevention Month to Ray Salzberg, President, Rock Creek Foundation, and former Commissioner. See Attachment A for Proclamation.

New Business:

The Commission has received a response from County Executive Leggett in regards to the Commission's letter requesting support for a mandatory "Design for Life Montgomery" program. His response indicated that he is not prepared, at this time, to support a proposal to make this program mandatory. Instead, he offered his support in talking with the builders and encouragement to promote the voluntary program.

Charlie Crawford, Vice-Chair, made the following motions:

1. The Commission will send a letter back to the County Executive asking for a meeting to fully understand his position not supporting a mandatory program.
2. The Commission will seek to meet and gain support for a mandatory program from the Commission on Veterans Affairs, Commission on Aging, and Human Rights Commission.

Mark Maxin, Commissioner, amended the motion to include the following:

3. The Commission will invited builders to a full Commission meeting to brief the group on their position regarding a mandatory Visit-ability program.

A vote was taken and the motions were approved with a vote of 12 to 5.

Charlie offered to draft the letter. Further discussion about these motions and the Commission's strategy will take place at the Steering Committee meeting next week. Trish recommended that the Commission discuss ways to promote and market the Design for Life Montgomery program.

FY12 Operating Budget Highlights and Forecast:

Jay Kenney, Ph.D., Chief, Aging & Disability Services, gave an overview of the budget cuts for Health & Human Services (HHS). This year, HHS took a 4.9% overall reduction. Highlights include:

- The contract for Independence Now (INNOW) was eliminated - \$51,000.
- The grant for Kennedy Institute's Community Options program was eliminated - \$324,000. The program provides day services to persons with significant disabilities. The initial grant provided that 60% of the funding come from the State of Maryland and 40% come from the County. After discussions with Edward Orzechowski, President and CEO, Catholic Charities, the County Executive has agreed to amend this proposal. The amendments will be sent over to the County Council by April 21st.
- A 5% reduction (or \$388,250) to the Developmental Disabilities supplement, which augments the State funding given to the 26 residential providers in Montgomery County that offer programs including residential services, supportive employment, day services, and Community Supported Living Arrangements. It is estimated there will be 90 new clients entering the system this year between transitioning youth and emergency assistance placements. The County Council's HHS Committee has split this item in half into two increments of \$194,125 each and added them to their reconciliation list. Restoration of this item will not be confirmed until the County Council submits its FY12 Operating Budget.
- The In-Home Care Program was reduced by \$100,000, which equates to 8 individuals. 75% are seniors and 25% are non-seniors/people with disabilities.

Jay indicated that Uma Ahluwalia, Director, HHS, is an advocate and supporter of programs and services for people with disabilities.

Jay reported that the County Attorney is reviewing regulatory changes that would alter the current duplicative licensing process for group home providers. Montgomery County is the only county in Maryland that has its own group home licensing law. By instituting a new regulation that would require that group homes need only be licensed by the State of Maryland would save \$40,000 across the board for all providers.

Action Item Review: None.

Committee Reports:

Seth Morgan, Commissioner, reported that a preliminary meeting on accessible parking issues will be held on Friday, April 15th. Mike Subin, Esq., Executive Director, Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission, has been charged with leading this task force. Seth is continuing to attend Commission on Health meetings. He will discuss the accessible housing issue at their next meeting on April 28th.

Mark Maxin, Commissioner, noted that in March the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) finalized the regulations ADA Amendments Act. The regulations are designed to simplify the determination of who has a "disability" and make it easier for people to establish that they are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mark would like to set up a meeting with Joe Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources (OHR), to get an update on the Hiring Preference program. Angela Washington, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, noted that no individuals have used the hiring preference yet. She has set up a meeting with Mr. Adler and Melissa Davis to discuss how to monitor the hiring program and to insure that it is being implemented correctly and any barriers that are identified are resolved. Fairfax County has contacted OHR about replicating the Hiring Preference. Angela is working with them and has provided documentation on how the hiring preference became legislation.

Angela is encouraging Montgomery County employees that had previously applied for a reasonable accommodation under the ADA to reapply due to the new ADA Amendments Act regulations as they may now qualify.

Angela added that there was a public hearing regarding the reorganization of the Office of Human Rights. It is currently proposed that OHR be reduced from a staff of 18 to a Director and two investigators. There was a lot of opposition from the community as the reorganization would require individuals to file complaints in Baltimore with the State of Maryland or in the District of Columbia with the Federal Government instead of in Montgomery County. A worksession has been scheduled to further discuss the implications of a reorganization. Angela will continue to report to the Commission regarding this matter.

Susan Hartung, Commissioner, attended the County Council's Public Safety and Health and Human Services Committee meeting to discuss public safety agency interactions with people with mental and physical disabilities. This meeting was prompted by a recent incident where a young man in Virginia with Asperger's Syndrome was incapacitated by police with a shot from a Taser, and was placed under arrest. Susan will draft a letter to send to the County Council regarding training of public safety agencies to work with individuals with Asperger's Syndrome.

Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, attended a meeting with Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison, about inter-Commission cooperation.

Announcements:

Joy Barrow, Department of Transportation (DOT), has been confirmed by the County Council as an Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member. She works with the Call 'N' Ride program, which provides a limited number of trips for low income seniors and persons with disabilities, and Medicaid transportation for low income persons for medically necessary trips. She also attends meetings for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee and the MetroAccess subcommittee of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Daphne Pallozzi, Commissioner, has resigned from her position at the Kennedy Institute. She has accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer at Ardmore Enterprises.

The Montgomery County Mental Health Advisory Committee is hosting a Wellness and Recovery Resource Fair on Thursday, May 12 from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Executive Office Building, Lower Level Cafeteria, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland. Service providers will be available to discuss the programs and services provided to those living with mental illness and their families.

Community Speaks: None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, May 11th, 2011 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD – Lobby Auditorium, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, May 18th, 2011 – 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD – 1st Floor Tan Conference Room, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Office Services Coordinator
Betsy Luecking, Disability Policy Specialist